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MILK PRODUCERS COUNCIL

"Serving the Dairy Industry for Over 50 Years"

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December 2, 2005

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Mr. Lester Snow
Director
Department of Water Resources
State of California
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for the South Delta Improvements Program

Dear Director Snow,

On behalf of Milk Producers Council, a non-profit dairy trade organization, I am writing to express our support for the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) South Delta Improvements Program (SDIP). We believe that the SDIP will better utilize our existing water resources and infrastructure, which will help address and balance the water needs of our agricultural community, urban population and large economy. Collectively, it will improve our state's water supply reliability, water quality and the overall health of the Bay-Delta ecosystem. The program will construct seasonal tidal gates to protect fish, and improve water circulation and quality in the Delta, dredge select Delta channels to improve water deliveries for local farmers, and allow State Water Project deliveries to increase modestly.

Currently, the state is constrained in its ability to use surplus water supplies. We have the infrastructure to move the water, but until SDIP is approved, the state's water managers cannot fully or responsibly use the existing system. SDIP calls for only a 3-5% increase in the average amount of water pumped from the Delta. More significantly, SDIP will provide the flexibility to shift the timing of water deliveries when surplus is available and when environmentally safe to do so. SDIP will not require building a new project or the construction of major new infrastructure, and funding for the program has already been secured through passage of voter-approved bonds in 2000 (Proposition 13).

Water is critical not only to the health of the families, farms, and businesses we represent but also to the entire state of California. Therefore, it is imperative that we have a more flexible water delivery system so that the state can continue to accommodate agriculture and the growth in our population and economy while relying on existing water supplies.

Again, we strongly support SDIP and encourage all key stakeholders to help advance this critically needed project.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Sybrand Vander Dussen
President

cc: Ms. Anne Newton, Red Gate Communication, Inc.